

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CAIRO 09674 291441Z

41

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 SAM-01 SAB-01 EB-07 CU-02 TRSE-00

COME-00 EUR-12 EA-06 IO-10 /093 W

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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 528

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PINT EG

SUBJECT: STUDENT UNREST

REF: CAIRO 9651; CAIRO 6495

1. DECEMBER AND JANUARY ARE TRADITIONAL MONTHS IN EGYPT FOR STUDENT PROTEST. WEATHER IS PLEASANT, NO EXAMS LOOM, AND AS UK EMB COLLEAGUE POINTS OUT, SENIOR STUDENTS REQUIRE MONTH OR TWO TO POLITICIZE FRESHMEN, WHOM THEY SEND OUT IN VANGUARD OF DEMOS WHERE POLICE TRUNCHEONS SWING WITH MOST EFFECT.

2. ALREADY THIS YEAR, PROTEST POSTERS PAPER THE WALLS OF CAIRO'S UNIVERSITIES. SOME ARE TRADITIONAL STUDENT COMPLAINTS AGAINST DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS ("STOP ENSLAVING THE PEOPLE"), BUT FEW DEAL WITH UNIVERSITY AFFAIRS. MOST ATTACK GOE POLICIES, INCLUDING ECONOMIC LIBERALIZATION, COOPERATION WITH USG ON FOREIGN POLICY ("FORD THREATENS OCCUPATION OF OIL FIELDS"), INABILITY TO SOLVE SUPPLY CRISIS AND GOE'S ALLEGED CRUELTY TO COMMUNISTS. IN CONTRAST, AZHAR UNIVERSITY POSTERS PREDICTABLY ATTACK COMMUNISM AND URGE GOE TO CLAMP DOWN HARDER.

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PAGE 02 CAIRO 09674 291441Z

3. ACCORDING TO ONE PUBLISHED REPORT, ARREST OF TEACHER AND STUDENT AT CAIRO UNIVERSITY CHARGED WITH CONTACTS WITH HOSTILE ELEMENTS (CAIRO A-179) RESULTED IN FIST FIGHT BETWEEN TWO ORGANIZED STUDENT GROUPS. AN ARTICLE IN THE UNIVERSITY'S WEEKLY PAPER SUGGESTS STUDENTS STANDING TRIAL FOR ATTACK ON MILITARY TECHNICAL SCHOOL (CAIRO 9465) MAY REALLY HAVE BEEN TORTURED AND WONDERS "WHO IS BEHIND" ARRESTS OF STUDENTS BY STATE SECURITY. IMPLICATION IS THAT GOE RULES WITH IRON FIST, WHICH IS BLATANTLY UNFAIR CHARGE IN VIEW SADAT'S GENUINE STRESS ON SOCIAL LIBERALIZATION.

4. AS USUAL, USG IS BRUNT OF MANY POSTERS, PARTICULARLY AT 'AIN SHAMS UNIVERSITY: "US RADIATES CORREUPTION TO WHOLE WORLD;" "KISSINGER IN CAIRO AND NEW ARMS FOR ISRAEL;" "UNCS DEBATE SHOWS CLEARLY USG OPPOSES ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL."

5. COMMENT: POSSIBILITY OF SERIOUS STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS IS CONSTANT WORRY TO INTERIOR MINISTRY. PRIMIN HEGAZY, IN GOE POLICY STATEMENT TO PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY, GAVE CLEAR INDICATION OF GOE CONCERN (CAIRO 9651) AND PRESIDENT SADAT THROUGHOUT THE SUMMER HAS BENT OVER BACKWARD TO TALK DIRECTLY TO STUDENT GROUPS, AS TASK HE UNDERTAKES IN EFFECTIVELY AVUNCULAR STYLE ("NOW, MY BOY"). POTENTIAL FOR STUDENT UNREST IS HEIGHTENED THIS YEAR BECAUSE OF MAJOR ISSUES WHICH EXIST BOTH AT HOME (HIGH COST OF LIVING, SUPPLY CRISIS) AND ABROAD (NO APPARENT FURTHER ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL IN SIGHT). ON OTHER HAND, VICE-DEAN OF CAIRO UNIVERSITY ENGINEERING FACULTY (WHERE STUDENT TROUBLES OFTEN START) COMMENTED INFORMALLY THAT LIKELIHOOD OF DISBURBANCES SEEMED LESS THIS YEAR BECAUSE STUDENTS SEEMED TO FEEL SADAT AND GOE HAVE BETTER SENSE OF PURPOSE AND DIRECTION NOW. OBVIOUSLY, FAILURE OF GOE PROGRAMS TO PRODUCE RESULTS COULD TURN THIS ATTITUDE AROUND VERY QUICKLY. IN ANY EVENT, WE ARE SO FAR UNAWARE OF ANY SERIOUS TROUBLE OCCURRING ON ANY CAIRO OR ALEXANDRIA CAMPUS.
EILTS

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